US relations with India and Pakistan

†4544. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S Secretary of State during her recent visit to India, has stated that they intend to adopt a policy of having good relations with India and Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether keeping in view this development, America has agreed to lift the sanction imposed on military assistance to Pakistan and India and has also agreed to sell latest arms to both the countries; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice visited India on March 15-16, 2005. She held discussion with External Affairs Minister and called on the Prime Minister. Initiatives to advance Indo-U.S. relations were an important element of the agenda. U.S. ties with Pakistan were also discussed during the talks.

(b) U.S. had already fully lifted sanctions under the Glenn Amendment on Military export licenses and defence sales to India in September, 2001. However, in case of Pakistan, while sanctions under the Glenn, Pressler and Symington Amendments stood waived at the same time, sanctions under Section 508 of foreign Operations Appropriations Act remained operational. This requires periodic waivers by the President to be approved by the Congress. The last such waiver, for two years, was approved in 2004. The question of agreeing to lift such sanctions during the visit of Dr. Rice therefore did not arise.

Defence cooperation was among the issues that came up for discussion and Dr. Rice emphasized that U.S. would address reliability concerns on the part of India.

(c) Government will make decisions in regard to defence procurement on the basis on national interest.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.